



**The Leukemia &
Lymphoma Society**
Fighting Blood Cancers

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Memorandum in Support

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Supports Legislation in Connecticut to Provide Insurance for Oral Chemotherapy Treatments

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) strongly supports legislation to require health insurance plans in Connecticut, to provide the same coverage for orally administered chemotherapy treatments, as is extended for intravenously dispensed, or injected, chemotherapy. It is part of LLS' mission to ensure that patients with blood cancers have access to the best possible therapies to fight their illness, regardless of a patient's age, ethnicity, income or insurance status.

As a result of ever evolving, cutting-edge research and a commitment to improving treatments and finding cures, researchers are continually identifying new and more effective therapies for cancers. One of the greatest breakthroughs in the blood cancer world has been the development of Gleevec, which is used to treat Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML) and is an oral chemotherapy drug. With Gleevec, CML patients are able to undergo chemotherapy by taking a pill in the comfort of their home, giving them the freedom to carry on with their daily lives; this is true, not just for patients taking Gleevec, but other cancer patients receiving oral chemotherapy treatments.

Oral chemotherapy is an exciting development for cancer patients and its benefits are significant. However, many insurance companies do not provide the same coverage for oral chemotherapies – like Gleevec – , as they do for more traditional IV chemotherapy, making it extremely cost prohibitive for countless patients. Specifically, since this chemotherapy treatment comes in the form of a pill or liquid, insurance companies classify the therapy as a prescription drug treatment. Consequently, the drug is not covered as a traditional “chemo” treatment and the patient is often forced to pay out-of-pocket – usually at a much higher price.

To level the playing field for all cancer patients, insurers in Connecticut should cover the cost of oral treatments as it would standard chemotherapy, ensuring that no matter how administered, cancer patients can relax knowing that they're being given access to the best possible care at a price they can afford.

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